Acquisition of modern aircrafts by Indian

906. SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's new airline company formed with the merger of Air India and Indian has embarked upon a massive long term programme for acquiring modern aircrafts for its use; and

(b) if so, the details thereof, indicating the nature of aircrafts proposed to be acquired, total funds required for the purpose, its source and the time-frame for the completion of the plan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Both Air India and Indian Airlines are in the process of inducting new aircraft in their fleet. Air India has signed a purchase agreement with M/s Boeing for the purchase of 68 aircraft comprising 8X B777-200LR, 15X B777-300ER and 27X B787-8 for Air India Limited and 18 X B737-800W for Air India Charters Limited (a subsidiary of Air India) at a cost of Rs. 34,615 crores. Similarly, Indian Airlines Limited has signed an agreement with M/s Airbus Industries and CFM International for procurement of 43 Airbus aircraft, comprising 19 A319, 4 A320 and 20 A321 at a cost of Rs. 10,169 crores. The aircraft acquisition will be financed through External and Domestic Commercial Borrowings.

Out of 68 aircraft ordered by Air India and its subsidiary, 11 aircraft have been inducted and 57 aircraft are to be inducted by 2011. In respect of Indian Airlines, out of the 43 aircraft ordered, it has taken delivery of 4 aircraft and 39 aircraft would be delivered by April 2010.

Shortage of manpower

907. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is an acute manpower shortage in the aviation industry; and

(b) if so, the steps taken to tackle the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Due to sudden growth in the aviation sector, shortage of trained pilots is being felt in the industry.

(b) The Government has taken various steps to tackle the situation. These include conditionally increasing the age-limit to 65 years for exercising the privileges of their licences for commercial transport operations under prescribed conditions for pilots, upgradation and modernisation of training infrastructure of Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Uran Akademi (IGRUA) to enhance its training capacity, setting up of a world class flying training institute at Gondia, Maharashtra and assistance to flying clubs by allocating trainer aircraft through Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA)Aero Club of India (ACI). Besides, DGCA has approved a total of 26 flying training institutes (including IGRUA) in the country for imparting Commercial Pilot Licence (CPL) training.